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LETTER DATED 12 AUGUST 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF AUSTRIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to draw your attention to the statement issued on 11 August 1998 by the Presidency of the European Union concerning the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Ernst SUCHARIPA
Permanent Representative of Austria
to the United Nations

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Annex

[Original: English and French]

Statement on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo issued in Brussels on 11 August 1998 by the Presidency of the European Union

The European Union expresses its deep concern at the deterioration of the internal situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and particularly condemns the acts of violence against civilians. It calls upon all the parties in conflict to respect human rights and humanitarian laws and to not persecute the civilian population on grounds of nationality or ethnic origin but to strictly observe the right to protection for refugees and displaced persons. The Union encourages cooperation between the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations to find a solution that will protect the population groups concerned.

The European Union is also greatly preoccupied by the information regarding the possibility of foreign interference in the country's internal affairs and agrees with the Charter of the United Nations and the fundamental principles of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in support of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the territorial integrity of neighbouring countries.

The European Union emphasizes that peaceful solutions must be found to resolve the current problems so that the process of reconstruction and democratization can proceed. It is ready to contribute to those efforts and supports the démarches undertaken by OAU and several African countries in that connection.

Finally, the European Union calls for the safety of nationals of the member States of the European Union and the staff of humanitarian organizations residing in the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to be guaranteed.

The Central and Eastern European countries and Cyprus associated with the European Union and Iceland and Norway, European Free Trade Area countries members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with the present statement.